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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE
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UNHCR ACTIVITIES FINANCED BY VOLUNTARY FUNDS: REPORT FOR 1993-1994 AND PROPOSED PROGRAMMES AND BUDGET FOR 1995

PART V. SOUTH WEST ASIA, NORTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Section 5 - Egypt

(submitted by the High Commissioner)

GE.94-03038

V.5 EGYPT

Country Overview

Characteristics of the refugee population

1. At 31 December 1993, the refugee population as registered by UNHCR in Egypt totalled 6,712 persons, consisting of 6,066 Somalis, 375 Ethiopians and Eritreans, and 271 refugees of other nationalities, including stateless persons. The number of children under the age of 4 years was 175, and between 4 and 18 years, 1,325. The breakdown was as follows:

Country of	Number	Number	Percent M	Percent F	Percent C*	Location	Type of Assistance
Somalia	4,869	6,066	10	30	60	Cairo	RE,CM,EA
Ethiopia/Eritrea	383	375	90	8	2	Cairo/ Alexandria	RE, CM, EA
Stateless	197	191	43	54	3	Cairo/ Alexandria	LS,TF
Various	60	80	41	25	34	Cairo	CM,RE
Total	5,509	6,712	16	29	55		

* Children below the age of 18

Major developments (1993 and first quarter 1994)

2. Following the tightening of security controls in the country, the Government formally requested UNHCR to ensure that recognized refugees have a definite and regular source of income. In addition, the prevailing difficult economic conditions rendered an increasing number of refugees dependent on UNHCR assistance.

3. In the first quarter of 1994, UNHCR was approached by a number of Sudanese asylum-seekers who are currently being screened by the Regional Office to determine their eligibility for UNHCR assistance.

Programme objectives and priorities

4. The UNHCR office in Egypt has established the following country programme objectives for 1994 and 1995:

Somali refugees

5. These refugees will continue to enjoy temporary asylum pending their eventual repatriation. As local integration prospects are very limited, assistance is aimed at addressing their most urgent needs. Refugees will be provided with subsistence allowances, medical care, education and vocational training. Women will additionally benefit from targeted family planning training. Private or public primary and secondary education will also be provided to children whenever possible.

Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees

6. Most of these people came from the Sudan, where they were recognized as refugees. Fourteen of them are university students and are expected to complete their studies in 1994, following which they will be assisted to repatriate. A limited number will be processed for resettlement. For the rest, only those most in need will receive basic assistance until they are able to repatriate.

Stateless persons

7. These consist mainly of destitute Armenians over 65 years of age who live in Cairo and Alexandria. They will continue to benefit from subsistence allowances, in the absence of any other source of income, and regular visits from social workers.

Sudanese refugees

8. Only the neediest individuals who would have been considered eligible for assistance will receive basic subsistence allowances, as well as medical care and education.

Other nationalities

9. This group includes refugees from various African, Middle Eastern and Asian countries. It also includes persons from the former Yugoslavia who were in Egypt prior to the outbreak of the conflict. They will receive assistance if required.

Resettlement

10. UNHCR's objective will be to facilitate the resettlement of persons who cannot be granted asylum in Egypt for security or other pertinent reasons or circumstances, including family reunion cases.

Programme Delivery and Administrative Support Costs

11. The Regional Office in the Arab Republic of Egypt also has the overall responsibility for the UNHCR Offices in Kuwait, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. A Protection Officer post will be established in the Regional Office in Cairo as of July 1994 to strengthen the Office in view of the increased number of asylum-seekers, both in Cairo and in the region. In addition, the Regional Office will cover any needs arising in Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates in close co-operation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as UNHCR is not directly represented in these countries.

Arrangements for implementation/related inputs

12. Caritas-Egypt is UNHCR's main implementing partner involved in the assessment of refugee needs, delivery of subsistence allowances, counselling, medical care, and education. The Family Planning Association provides refugee women with courses on health education and family planning. The Ministry of Saint Andrew's and the All Saints Church offers language courses to refugee children. Two United Nations Volunteers are hired through UNDP to strengthen the UNHCR protection unit, mainly compiling a computerized database and conducting initial interviews.

General Programmes

(a) **Variations in planned activities in 1993**

13. Assistance programmes in Egypt were aimed initially towards education, health care and emergency assistance to avoid the granting of subsistence allowances. However, significant changes took place towards the middle of 1993 following the request by the Government that UNHCR should ensure that all recognized refugees have a definite and regular source of income. Simultaneously, many refugees who had lived by their own means in Egypt for the past two to three years had exhausted their savings.

14. In view of these circumstances, the number of individuals in need of subsistence allowances and payment of medical expenses increased from 1,095 to 1,829 persons. While the approved budget was maintained, internal budgetary transfers were effected to increase allocations for medical care and to strengthen the operational capacity of the implementing partner.

(b) **1994 planned implementation**

15. The ongoing care and maintenance programme, which includes subsistence allowances for 4,370 needy refugees, education and health care, will continue in 1994. There is an increased emphasis on vocational training, education for children and family planning for refugee women, which are intended to provide special care for women and children, and to help develop skills useful to the refugees upon their repatriation. Prospects for self-sufficiency in Egypt through local employment look rather bleak in view of the general economic situation, which implies the continued provision of subsistence allowances for those most in need.

16. The major new element, as a result of which the 1994 allocation has been increased, is the provision of assistance to a limited number of needy Sudanese not to exceed 2,000 individuals, following the pre-screening of their situation by the Regional Office. They will receive the same assistance currently provided to refugees of other nationalities.

17. Stateless persons will not continue to benefit from a Trust Fund established by the Jinishian Memorial Programme. This organization decided to use this fund to assist Armenians in Armenia as of January 1994. Consequently, UNHCR has had to assume the assistance requirements of this caseload as of 1994.

18. Somali refugees, the majority of whom come from the southern parts of Somalia, are not expected to repatriate in significant numbers in 1994, since the situation in Somalia continues to be uncertain.

19. Resettlement will be limited to 40 cases with specific protection problems in Egypt, vulnerable cases, and those with family ties abroad. The main countries of resettlement will be Australia, Canada and the United States of America.

(c) 1995 Programme proposals

Care and maintenance

20. The proposed allocation for 1995 will cover the same range of activities as in 1994, consisting of subsistence allowances, health care, education and vocational training. Provisions have been made to include assistance for up to 2,000 needy Sudanese refugees for the whole of 1995, as a result of which the 1995 proposed allocation is substantially higher.

Voluntary repatriation

21. Large voluntary repatriation movements are not expected in 1995. The costs of small scale repatriation movements will be met from the Overall Allocation.

Local settlement

22. Up to 100 elderly and/or handicapped stateless persons will continue to receive financial assistance to cover their basic needs.

Resettlement

23. Resettlement will be limited to 40 cases as in 1994, including family reunion cases.

Special Programmes

Education Account

24. The proposed appropriations for 1994/1995 and for 1995/1996 cover scholarship assistance for 40 and 25 Somali refugee students, respectively.

Programme Delivery and Administrative Support Costs

(a) Variations in planned activities in 1993

25. Expenditure under all budget chapters was within the approved allocation. Expenditure under common staff costs was lower since these costs were budgeted at an average rate which was higher than actual expenditure. Regional travel expenditure was lower due to reduced travel to countries in the region, to which frequent missions from Regional Office Cairo had previously been undertaken to support and monitor their activities. General operating expenses were also lower as no improvements to the premises were undertaken in 1993. Purchases of office supplies and materials and of new furniture and equipment were also not made.

(b) **1994 planned implementation**

26. Unlike in the past, the Egyptian Government has requested the Regional Office to provide detailed information on each case that is recommended by UNHCR for yrefugee status. This, together with the increasing number of Sudanese asylum-seekers approaching UNHCR in the first quarter of 1994, has generated a considerable protection workload for the Regional Office in Cairo. The staffing resources of this office were thus overstretched during the first half of 1994. Consequently, the creation of one post of Protection Officer was approved, effective 1 July 1994, in order to respond to the growing protection activities, particularly in dealing with an increasing urban refugee caseload.

27. The 1994 revised requirement is higher than the initial estimate, and costs under salaries and common staff costs have increased to take account of the creation of the new post of Protection Officer and an upward adjustment in the budgeting of common staff costs, which had previously been applied at an average rate that was lower than actual costs. Non-staff costs, particularly local and regional travel, are lower than the initial estimate, since travel to countries in the region by Regional Office staff is expected to decrease, with the UNHCR Offices in the Syrian Arab Republic, Lebanon and Kuwait having attained greater operational and administrative capabilities than in previous years, with adequate human resources and office management infrastructure. Costs under general operating expenses have, on the other hand, increased to provide additional space in the Regional Office for processing Sudanese cases, and to allow for enlargement of offices in the second half of 1994. Additional expenses related to the procurement of one computer, air-conditioners and furniture for three additional offices, conference and library rooms have also increased the requirement under the budget chapter for the acquisition of furniture and equipment.

(c) **Programme proposals**

28. The staffing level is likely to remain unchanged for 1995. The 1995 initial estimate under salaries and common staff costs is expected to be similar to the 1994 revised level. Under non-staff costs, travel costs are expected to be higher to take account of the new Protection Officer who would be undertaking several missions in the region as a whole.

UNHCR EXPENDITURE IN EGYPT

(in thousands of United States dollars)

1993	1994		1995	
AMOUNT OBLIGATED	ALLOCATION APPROVED BY 1993 EXCOM	PROPOSED REVISED ALLOCATION	SOURCE OF FUNDS AND TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	PROPOSED ALLOCATION/ PROJECTION
GENERAL PROGRAMMES (1)				
981.3 a/	1,298.9	1,049.6	CARE AND MAINTENANCE	2,024.9
23.5 b/	–	–	VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION	–
323.6 c/	62.0	61.3	LOCAL SETTLEMENT	86.8
29.9	29.9	29.9	RESETTLEMENT	29.9
–	–	930.0	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Annexes I a and II a	945.6
1,358.3	1,390.8	2,070.8	SUB-TOTAL OPERATIONS	3,087.2
491.7	558.9	139.4	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT See Annexes I b and II b	153.2
1,850.0	1,949.7	2,210.2	TOTAL (1)	3,240.4
SPECIAL PROGRAMMES (2)				
183.0	183.0	183.0	EDUCATION ACCOUNT 25 university scholarships	106.3
30.0	–	–	OTHER TRUST FUNDS	–
132.7	26.0	16.0	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT Junior Professional Officer	16.0
345.7	209.0	199.0	TOTAL (2)	122.3
2,195.7	2,158.7	2,409.2	GRAND TOTAL (1+2)	3,362.7

a/ of which US$ 4,496 incurred against Overall Allocation
b/ obligation incurred against Overall Allocation
c/ of which US$ 13,970 incurred against Overall Allocation